



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

161. *Titus and Gisippus*.—This is not listed under "Romances in Prose," but the first translation of the story into English, by Elyot, was in prose. Goldsmith's story of Alcander and Septimius in *The Bee* is scarcely so important a variant as some Elizabethan stories. Closely related to *Titus and Gisippus* is *The notable hystory of two faithful lovers named Alfagus and Archelaus. Whcarein is declared the true fygyure of Amytie and Freyndshypp. . . . Translated into English meeter*, 1574, by Edward Ienynghes (cf. Corser, *Collectanea*, Part 8, pp. 303-8). Another variant, *Alexander and Lodowick*, surviving in a ballad, was dramatized for Henslowe (cf. Greg, *Henslowe's Diary*, II, 182). Lee, *Decameron*, pp. 339 f., describes a third variant, the ballad "Alphonso and Ganselo," in T. Deloney's *Garland of Goodwill*. The Titus and Gisippus story probably influenced Lyly in *Euphues* (cf. *Modern Philology*, VII, 577-85), but Miss Scott has not included *Euphues* in her bibliography.

C. R. BASKERVILL

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Miscellanea Hibernica. By KUNO MEYER. University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. II, No. 4, November, 1916. Pp. 55.

Aside from Professor Cox's "Middle Irish Fragment of Bede's Ecclesiastical History" (*Studies in Honor of J. M. Hart* [New York, 1910], pp. 122-78), Rev. G. W. Hoey's *Irish Homily on the Passion* (Baltimore, 1911), and Rev. J. A. Geary's *Five Irish Homilies from the Rennes MS* (Washington, D.C., 1912), Dr. Meyer's *Miscellanea Hibernica* constitutes the most extensive body of purely linguistic Celtic material which has yet emanated from an American press.¹

The *Miscellanea Hibernica* consists of a series of notes published by Dr. Meyer as lecturer in Celtic at the University of Illinois. Nearly half the volume (pp. 28-51) is devoted to etymological observations (Sec. VI) and to corrections and emendations in published Irish texts (Sec. VII) and in Thurneysen's *Handbuch des Altirischen* (Sec. VIII). Section VI forms a substantial addition to Dr. Meyer's already extensive contributions to our knowledge of Irish lexicography. Another important division of the brochure deals primarily with questions of meter. In Section III (pp. 14-17) the author establishes the important fact that the Old Irish spirant *th* had been completely aspirated by the tenth century. He also quotes several examples of certain rare variations on the familiar *debide* meter (pp. 15-16), edits critically a didactic poem ascribed to St. Moling (pp. 17-18), and prints

¹ Cf. J. L. Gerig, *Columbia University Quarterly* (December, 1916), pp. 41 f. "The Irish Lives of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton" (pp. 338), ed. by Professor Robinson, of Harvard, was published in Germany in the *Ztsch. f. celt. Philol.*, VI (1907).

six ancient Irish poems showing sporadic rhyme in addition to the older alliteration (pp. 18-28). One of these he regards, doubtless correctly, as "an originally pagan prayer remodelled by a Christian poet." If this surmise be correct, the document furnishes a startling illustration of the kindly attitude of the early Christian Irish toward their ancient pagan beliefs. Sections I (pp. 9-12) and II (pp. 12-14), to which attention will be drawn immediately, deal with well-known characters in Irish romantic saga.

Section I is of especial importance to those interested in Irish literature either for its own sake or for its possible relations to other European literatures. It consists of a note on Sualtair, the putative father of the great Cuchulainn. Dr. Meyer points out that the Ulster hero, known to pagan tradition as the son of a supernatural being, Lug (perhaps a god), has been supplied with a mortal father through one of those errors "which abound in Irish as well as in Welsh genealogical tables." The name of Cuchulainn's mortal father is given variously as Soalta, Soa(i)lte, Sualtach, and Sualtair, of which the latter, although the commonest, is the latest. Just as King Amadair Flidais evolved from a misreading of a *máthair Flidais*, "his mother (was) Flidais," and King Bran mac Febail, familiar to all readers of the *Imram Brain*, originated from a misinterpretation of the name of the promontory called Srúb Brain, "Raven's Beak," as if it were "Bran's Headland,"¹ so the name of Cuchulainn's parent appears to have arisen from a mistranslation of the adjective *soalta* applied to the young hero, as in a passage quoted by Dr. Meyer from the *Book of Leinster*, in which Leborcham, the official woman satirist of the court of Ulster, addresses Cuchulainn as *gein Loga soalta*, "well-nurtured son of Lug." That Cuchulainn's earthly father owes his name to this or a similar error is rendered still more probable by the highly suspicious circumstance that in its earliest form—*Soalta*, *Soailte*—the name is uninflected, as is also the case with the later *Sualtach*, which latter "suggests the meaning 'well-jointed,' while *Sualtair* may be looked upon as the superlative of *su-atta* [*so-atta*], the genitive having, as often in proper names, taken the place of the nominative." It is worth adding that the invention of a human father for Cuchulainn perhaps explains the fact that in the *Cóir Anmann* Sualtair is called *Sídhe*, "of the elf mound," and is supplied with a supernatural mother: an epithet originally applied to the son has been transferred to the father and the fairy mother invented to account for it.² Dr. Meyer also fails to note the fact that a Sualtach appears as the grandfather of Finn mac Cumail in the *Tesmolta Cormaic*.³

The bearing of these observations on Irish literary history and on the science of storiology, though not touched upon by Dr. Meyer, is important. Students who use Celtic tradition for purposes of literary investigation are liable to disregard the editorial element in recorded Irish tradition, whereas

¹ Cf. *Rom. Rev.*, IX (1918), 39, n. 29.

² *Irische Texte*, III, 1 (1891), 407.

³ *Sil. Gad.*, I (1892), 92; II, 99.

it becomes more and more evident not only that the great mass of ancient Irish saga literature was put into its present form at a period when the events described were thought of as belonging to the remote past, but that the work was accomplished by scholarly redactors who, according to their lights, combined into new and often awkward forms much genuine folk tradition, outlined in sketchy fashion accounts whose details could be filled out according to the fancy of future narrators, unscrupulously devised stories to account for unfamiliar names, or introduced new characters to whom they attached popular motifs or tales of their own devising. With this light one has only to read such documents as the *Dinnshenchas*, the *Cóir Anmann*, and the *Acallam na Senórach* to appreciate how many Irish stories owe their local habitation, if not their very existence, to fanciful learned or semilearned etymologies.

Dr. Meyer's discovery is particularly important in connection with one of our most archaic and puzzling Irish sagas, the *Compert Conchulainn*, "Birth of Cuchulainn." Of the several extant versions of this story the most ancient linguistically occurs in the early twelfth-century *Lebor na h-Uidre*.¹ Zimmer long ago pointed out that the LU version is a clumsy redaction of at least two earlier accounts of the birth of Cuchulainn,² and it now seems clear that at least one of these was itself a combination of still older elements. As Zimmer noted, the portion of the LU text containing the double account of Cuchulainn's divine and his human father is derived ultimately from the *Libur Dromma Snechta*, a lost manuscript which, as Thurneysen has recently shown, probably dated from the eighth century. This confused narrative is comprehensible only as a perversion of a story told in the fifteenth-century MS *Egerton 1782* (B.M.) (*Ir. T.*, I, 143 ff.) and more satisfactorily in the fourteenth-century MS *Stowe D. 4. 2* (R.I.A.) (*CZ*, V [1905], 500 ff.). It is obvious to the student of popular literature that the version given in the Egerton and Stowe manuscripts is based on an account in which Cuchulainn was the son of King Conchobar's sister Deichtire by a supernatural being who abducts his mistress to his fairy realm and, after keeping her for three years, causes her to assume bird form and lure her brother to the other world at the time her child is to be born. In the account represented by LU this clear, simple narrative has been distorted in an unsuccessful effort to combine it with other stories attached to Cuchulainn for the purpose of explaining his extraordinary career. For example, Cuchulainn, like Conchobar himself and other heroes among relatively primitive peoples, is born as the result of his mother's swallowing a diminutive animal which sprang into her mouth from a vessel out of which she was drinking; or he is the offspring of incestuous intercourse between Deichtire and her brother. The stupid

¹ Cf. Thurneysen, *Abhandl. d. königl. Gesell. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen*, Phil.-Hist. Kl., N.F., XIV, No. 2 (1912), p. 31.

² Zimmer, *Ztsch. f. vergl. Sprf.*, XXVIII (1887), 423 f.

and well-nigh incomprehensible patchwork resulting from the combination of these three accounts is further complicated by the addition of the story of Cuchulainn's birth as the son of the princess and a petty Ulster chieftain named Sualtaim, who, according to an oft-quoted interpolation in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, lives on the Plain of Muirthemne and from whose dwelling the boy hero Setanta (Cuchulainn), like Perceval, sets forth to seek deeds of arms at his uncle's court.

The story of Cuchulainn's conception through drink is an ethnological motif which obviously embarrassed the redactor of the LU version, and the incest story¹ is suggestive of those late Greek accounts which make Perseus the son of Danaë by her uncle instead of by Zeus. Though these as well as the remaining versions of Cuchulainn's birth-story are at least as old as the eighth century and it is impossible in the present state of our knowledge to determine the exact order in which the various stories became attached to the Ulster cycle, Dr. Meyer's discovery, supported by the independent investigations of the folklorist, furnishes an indication of the relative chronology of at least two of the accounts. Whatever may be the ultimate origin of the strange figure, one of whose names (Setanta) looks so un-Goidelic, the story of his purely mortal origin is probably the latest, and that of his half-divine origin is the most satisfactory and perhaps the most ancient, which has come down to us.² It should, however, be emphasized that the identification of Sualtaim as a comparatively late addition to the Cuchulainn saga in no way assists the futile efforts of real or would-be mythologists to identify Cuchulainn with a supposed Gaulish divinity Esus,³ with the sun,⁴ or with an ancient cuckoo-god.⁵ As Windisch has pointed out in an important dissertation,⁶ the attachment to Cuchulainn of various fabulous elements, some of which render him a striking parallel to the Greek Achilles, no more tend to prove his original divinity than, *mutatis mutandis*, they do in the case, say, of Beowulf or of Arthur.

Dr. Meyer's observations, taken in connection with the fact that Welsh as well as Irish mediaeval writers fabricated genealogies and told false etymological legends, lend plausibility to a hypothesis regarding the origin of King Arthur's patronymic which was suggested as early as the beginning of the last century⁷ and has been proposed several times since.⁸ It is based on an

¹ Nutt's arguments for the mythical character of the trait are not convincing (*op. cit.*, II, 44 f.).

² Cf. Nutt's analysis, *op. cit.*, II, 43.

³ D'Arbois de Jubainville, *RC*, XIX, 245 ff.

⁴ Rhys, *Hib. Lects.*, p. 435.

⁵ J. Pokorný, *Mitteil. d. anthrop. Gesell. in Wien*, XXXIX (1909), 89 ff.

⁶ *Abhandl. d. königl. sächsisch. Gesell. d. Wiss., Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, XXIX (1912), 109, 119 ff.

⁷ Cf. Joseph Ritson, *Life of King Arthur* (1825), pp. 53 ff.

⁸ Cf. Fletcher, *Harvard Studies and Notes*, X (1906), 89.

interpolation in certain late manuscripts of Nennius' *Historia Britonum*, according to which Arthur was called *mab uter Britannice, filius horribilis Latine, quoniam a puericia sua crudelis fuit*. The words *mab uter* are susceptible not only of the interpretation given in the Latin gloss,¹ but also of the translation "son of Uter"—a fact which may have led Geoffrey of Monmouth or one of his predecessors to supply Nennius' lauded *dux bellorum* with a father, and to exalt the latter by applying to him the epithet Pendragon, "Head-dragon," "Head-leader," in accordance with a practice "common in Welsh poetry of calling a king or great leader a dragon."² Merlin is brought forward to assist the newly created Uter Pendragon in playing Jupiter to Igera's Alcmena, and thus the father of the renowned Arthur enters the theater of mediaeval romance as the result of a linguistic perversion strikingly similar to that which gave rise to the father of the Ulster hero whose birth, training, and early exploits so closely resemble those of Hercules.³

The question of whether Arthur's father was invented by Geoffrey or someone else and of whether the falsification was deliberate or unintentional cannot, of course, be answered with certainty, but a twelfth-century Irish poem⁴ attacking the learned, who "for the sake of pelf" confound genealogical tables, is certainly eloquent of the methods in vogue in Ireland, whose relations with Wales are so amply attested on both sides of St. George's Channel.

Dr. Meyer's second note contributes an additional bit to the already large body of evidence tending to discredit Zimmer's brilliant though often unsound arguments in favor of Germanic influences on Irish tradition. Taking up the work begun by Windisch, the author completely demolishes Zimmer's contention that Fer Diad, Cuchulainn's friend and most famous opponent in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, is a combination of Siegfried and a Nibelung. Fer Diad's famous *congachness*, unlike Siegfried's horny skin, was a kind of armament, and the name signifies "Man of Smoke," not "Man of Mist," as Zimmer imagined. "It is evidently a nickname denoting perhaps a man with a smoke-colored complexion or hair, or referring to some accident at his birth, or the like." Zimmer's tendency to overestimate the classical influences on mediaeval Irish literature⁵ has also been recently pointed out by Professor W. F. Thrall.⁶

TOM PEETE CROSS

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

¹ Cf. word *uthr* in Pughe's *Welsh Dictionary*.

² Rhys, *Celtic Brit.* (1904), p. 136; cf. *Welsh People*, p. 106.

³ Of the name *Uther pendragon* Zimmer says, "Dies will doch . . . weiter nichts sagen als *Uther* (=latein *Victor*?) *dux bellorum*." *Nen. Vindic.*, p. 286, note.

⁴ *Misc. Hib.*, p. 9.

⁵ *Ztsch. f. d. Alt.*, XXXIII (1889), 129 ff., 257 ff.

⁶ *Mod. Phil.*, XV (1917), 449 ff.